

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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EB-07 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 TRSE-00 OMB-01 NSC-05 SCA-01 /046 W

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R 180155Z FEB 75

FM AMCONSUL LYON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 857

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS ZEN

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LYON 0024

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (MRN SHOULD READ 0024 VICE 0001)

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SUBJ: FRANCO- AMERICAN RELATIONS FROM A PROVINCIAL
POINT OF VIEW: THE LYON CONSULAR DISTRICT.

THE GENERALLY FAVORABLE REACTION HERE TO SECRETARY
COLEMANS CONCORDE DECISION PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO
COMMENT ON THE CONTINUING WARMTH OF FRANCO - AMERICAN
RELATIONS IN THE LYON CONSULAR DISTRICT.

CONCORDE IS OF EMOTIONAL RATHER THAN ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE
TO THIS PART OF FRANCE. THE INAUGURAL FLIGHTS ATTRACTED
EXTENSIVE LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE. MAYOR PRADEL RAISED THE
MATTER OF LANDING RIGHTS IN THE US FOR CONCORDE WITH
MINISTER GAMMON DURING THE LATTERS TRIP TO LYON TO OPEN
THE US - SPONSORED HOTEL AND RESTAURANT EQUIPMENT SHOW,
THE VERY DAY OF COLEMANS DECISION. MAYOR PRADEL URGED
THE MINISTER TO INTERVENE WITH SECRETARY COLEMAN IN
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FAVOR OF CONCORDE: WHAT MAY BE MORE SIGNIFICANT IS THAT
THEMAYOR APPARENTLY LEAKED TO THE LYON PRESS HIS

ATTEMPT TO INFLUENCE THE USG. AND THE MAYOR DOES NOTHING WITHOUT CALCULATING ITS EFFECT ON THE LYON ELECTORATE.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ARE NOT A MAJOR CONCERN OF THE RESIDENTS OF THIS DISTRICT. BUT, IN GENERAL, THEY ARE PRO-AMERICAN, A SENTIMENT BASED ON TRADITION, AND, IN SIGNIFICANT CASES, PERSONAL VISITS TO THE US. FOR EXAMPLE MAYOR PRADEL, A FIRM FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES, HAS VISITED THE US A NUMBER OF TIMES, ONCE AS OUR GUEST. HE PARTICULARLY ADMIRES THE FREEWAY SYSTEM OF LOS ANGELES, SAID TO BE THE MODEL FOR THE LYON SYSTEM. THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SOCIETE DELAROCHE, JEAN CHARLES LIGNEL, IS A FORMER LEADER-GRANTEE. HE ENJOYS COMPARING HIS LE PROGRES, LYONS LARGEST NEWSPAPER' TO THE WASHINGTON POST, WHICH HE SEES AS THE IDEAL. THE NEWSPAPERS OF THE SOCIETE DELAROCHE GROUP, WITH A COMBINED CIRCULATION OF OVER 1.2 MILLION THROUGHOUT THE CONSULAR DISTRICT, ARE PRO-AMERICAN. THE PROGRES, FOR EXAMPLE, GAVE BARE MINIMUM COVERAGE TO THE CIA "REVELATIONS" IN PARIS, BUT HAVE PROVIDED EXTENSIVE AND SYMPATHETIC COVERAGE FOR THE "INVEST IN USA" CONFERENCE, THE HOTEL AND RESTAURANT EQUIPMENT SHOW AND OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE CONSULATE.

PEOPLE HERE LIKE TO RECALL THE LONG ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE US AND FRANCE. THE CITY BEARS MANY PLACE-NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH THE US. THE GERMAN OCCUPATION OF LYON DURING WORLD WAR II WAS PARTICULARLY HARSH. THIS EXPERIENCE AND THE LIBERATION HAVE NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN. THE ANNUAL CITY-WIDE CELEBRATION OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY INTRODUCED BY EDOUARD HERRIOT (MAYOR OF LYON) AFTER WORLD WAR II HAS DONE MUCH TO FOCUS THE PRO-AMERICAN TRADITION.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS ARE CLOSE, AND BECOMING CLOSER. BUT WHILE THERE ARE MANY AMERICAN COMPANIES ACTIVE IN THE DISTRICT, THEY KEEP A RELATIVELY LOW PROFILE. THEY EMPLOY FEW AMERICANS INDEED, THE TOTAL AMERICAN POPULATION OF THE DISTRICT IS ONLY 2,000 AND MOST HAVE MARRIED INTO FRENCH FAMILIES. THUS THERE IS LITTLE FEAR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF AMERICAN ECONOMIC DOMINATION, WHILE THE RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH OF THE RHONE - REGION HELPS STIMULATE INTEREST IN ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH THE USA.

WITH THE FAVORABLE CONCORDE DECISION, THERE ARE NO PARTICULAR ISSUES ON THE HORIZON WHICH MIGHT GENERATE ANTI-AMERICAN FEELING. VIETNAM SEEMS LARGELY FORGOTTEN. THE LYON CONSULATE GENERAL ISSUES MORE NON IMMIGRANT VISAS THAN ANY OTHER CONSULATE IN FRANCE OUTSIDE PARIS. THE INDICATION ARE THAT MOST OF THESE FRENCH VISITORS

TO AMERICAN COME BACK SYMPATHETIC TO US. THIS RE
ENFORCES THE GENERAL PRO-AMERICAN TRADITION.
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